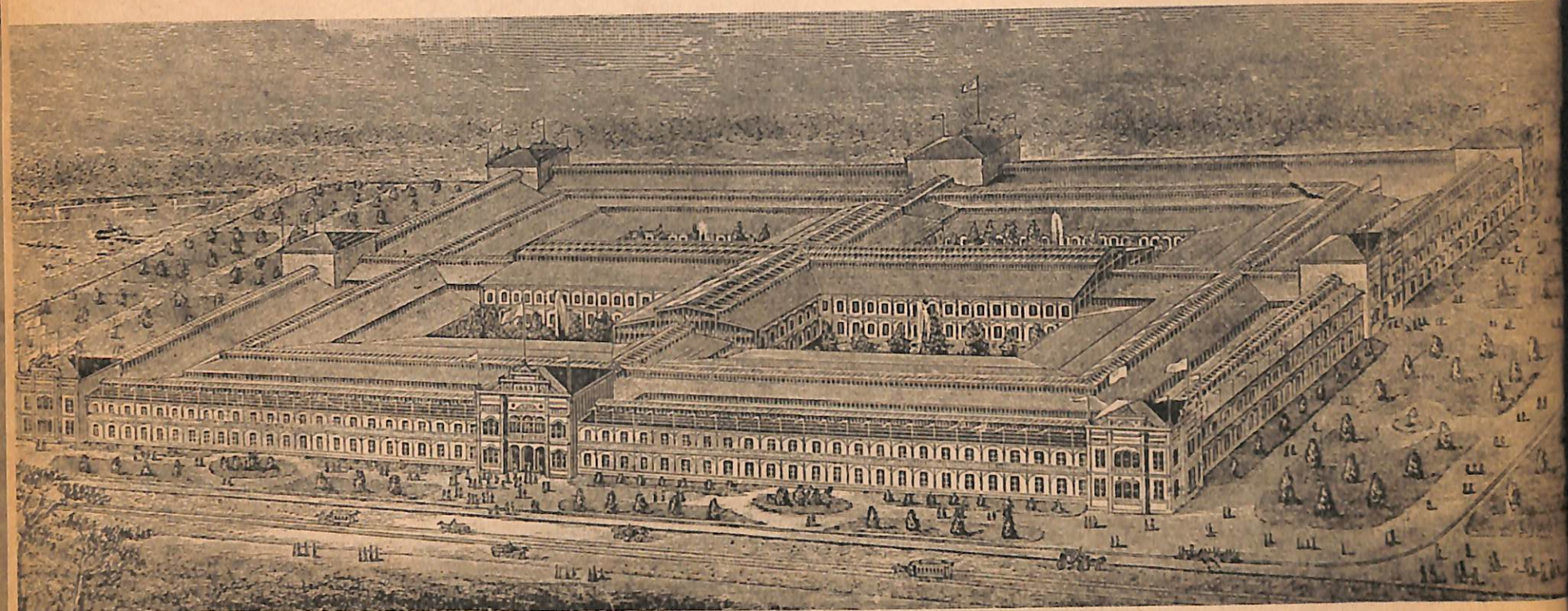




COMMERCIAL BOOST The Southern Exposition of 1873 provided Louisville with a showcase to display its resources.

Louisville was swept up by a great wave of civic optimism



ELECTRICITY was new, and the arc lamp trimmer still was a very familiar figure.

struction and unhealing wounds in Louisville and the rest of Kentucky. City streets and wharves had been worn out by the heavy traffic in war supplies; schools and public buildings were dilapidated, many having been used as military hospitals; railroad facilities were outmoded and inadequate.

On top of that, inflation was rampant, with cotton selling for 80 cents a pound in Louisville, and other items bringing an equally distorted price.

But worst of all for Louisville, the end of the war found the plantation economy of the South, where so much of the output of the city's industries had gone, totally bankrupt. Louisville, as the distribution center for the section, not only had to adjust to the changed economic conditions there, it also had to meet the threat of a newcomer bidding for what remained of the Southern trade—Cincinnati.

In short, Louisville was faced with a period of difficult social and business readjustment.

It was at this critical time that the Louisville Board of Trade, which had been organized early in the war, came forward as the agency leading the effort to patch up the city's commerce and get business rolling again. Through the leadership and inspiration of the Board, Louisville merchants, investors and manufacturers proved equal to their big task.

Industries diversified their products and pressed new merchandising methods, and the railroads expanded and made connections with Memphis, New Orleans, Mobile, Atlanta and other Southern cities. Salesmen were sent to

all parts of the South with instructions to get orders at any cost. Massive expositions and exhibits were held to point up Louisville's advantages as a business and industrial center, and to call attention to the products rolling from its plants.

During the years immediately following the war, Louisville and Cincinnati would wage an intense struggle for the Southern trade. In the end, they would share it, but both would be the better because of the competition it stirred up.

For this competitive situation literally forced Louisville, at least, into taking progressive steps immediately which otherwise might have required years to accomplish. The 1863-1888 period may have come in on an uncertain note, but it went out with Louisville once again in the throes of great civic optimism.

Among other boasts, this time it could claim that no other city of similar size in the world had half as many miles of street railway tracks as its 125 miles, and that no other city in the world was more abundantly supplied with transportation facilities, what with steamers leaving its wharves able to ply 32 navigable rivers and with 16 railroads entering from all directions.

The city also could point with pride to the fact that one third of all tobacco raised in North America was handled in Louisville warehouses, that its 100 registered grain distilleries produced half of all the bourbon whisky made, and that it led the world in production of cast gas and water pipe, plows, tanned sole and harness goods and veneering.